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City and County of Honolulu
City Council
Executive Matters and Legal Affairs

Committee Members

I am writing in follow up to my brief 3-minute testimony on August 9th, 2017 in opposition of Bill 69. I was very disappointed that every single council member voted in favor of such a complex issue before understanding the impact. I am upset that the process is being rushed to 'strike while the iron is hot'. Until there is more information, forward action only hurts your constituents.

I would first like to respond to my council person, Trevor Ozawa. I appreciate your concern for your young child who 'cannot choose'. That is your job as a parent. Your assumption is that these buildings are unsafe. This is simply not the case. You stated advances in technology significantly reduced the cost of installing fire suppression systems. That is just wrong. There is not one single fire sprinkler bid that I have reviewed in the past 3 years that is not three or four times the cost in 2005.

Can we increase life safety? Absolutely, I am far more likely to die via slip-and-fall or by poison than by a fire in my home. Is the focus on the right issue. The 300 or more buildings subject to Bill 69 have somehow managed the past 40+ years to have single digit loss of life due to fire. How many billions will be spent installing fire sprinklers and you can't guarantee there will not be another will another tragic fire-related death.

I'd like to address feasibility. The mayor showed that he does not understand the retrofit process when he mentioned in his testimony on August 9th that individual owners could voluntarily bring their units to compliance. That is simply ridiculous. Also, where will we find the water pressure to support all of the required fire suppression systems? Current supply systems are inadequate. There are too many logistical and financial hurdles. The 2005 study did not result in legislation. One would imagine the previous Committees and Councils made this decision with very good reason. Why have all but (2) cities across the country who enacted retroactive fire sprinkler codes made exemption for residential condominiums? Because of the complications and extreme hardships that result by imposing this on individuals.

My building is my community. It should be up to my community, not the City Council, to decide if fire sprinkler retrofit is warranted.

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